

possession, custody or control, that are likely to bear significantly on the issues raised in the proceeding. Unless otherwise directed, these documents shall not be filed with the Commission. In light of this automatic document production requirement, answers on the Accelerated Docket are not required to include a description of all relevant documents in the defendant's possession, custody or control, as required in paragraph (f)(2) of this section.

(6) Answers on the Accelerated Docket are not required to provide the description, required in paragraph (f)(3) of this section, of the manner in which the defendant identified persons with knowledge of, and documents relevant to, the dispute.

(7) In Accelerated Docket proceedings, the defendant, as required in § 1.729(i)(1), shall serve, contemporaneously with its answer, the complainant(s) with copies of documents, within the defendant's possession, custody or control, that are likely to bear significantly on the issues raised in the complaint and/or the answer.

144. Section 1.726 is amended by revising paragraph (a) and adding paragraph (g) as follows:

Section 1.726 Replies.

(a) Subject to paragraph (g) of this section governing Accelerated Docket proceedings, within three days after service of an answer containing affirmative defenses presented in accordance with the requirements of § 1.724(e), a complainant may file and serve a reply containing statements of relevant, material facts that shall be responsive to only those specific factual allegations made by the defendant in support of its affirmative defenses. Replies

which contain other allegations or arguments will not be accepted or considered by the Commission.

* * * * *

(g) Accelerated Docket Proceedings. For the purpose of this paragraph (g), the term document also shall include data compilations and tangible things.

(1) The filing of a separate pleading to reply to affirmative defenses is not permitted in Accelerated Docket proceedings. Complainants in such proceedings may include, in the § 1.733(i)(4), pre-status-conference filing, those statements that otherwise would have been the subject of a reply.

(2) In Accelerated Docket proceedings, the failure to reply, in the pre-status-conference filing, to an affirmative defense shall be deemed an admission of such affirmative defense and of any facts supporting such affirmative defense that are not specifically contradicted in the complaint.

(3) If a complainant replies to an affirmative defense in its § 1.733(i)(4), pre-status-conference filing, it shall include in that filing the information, required by paragraph (d)(1) of this section, identifying individuals with firsthand knowledge of the facts alleged in the reply.

(4) An Accelerated Docket complainant that replies to an affirmative defense in its § 1.733(i)(4), pre-status-conference filing also shall serve on the defendant, at the same time as that filing, those documents in the complainant's possession, custody or control that were not previously produced to the defendant and that are likely to bear significantly on the issues

raised in the reply. Such a complainant is not required to comply with the remainder of the requirements in paragraphs (d) and (e) of this section.

145. Section 1.727 is amended by revising paragraph (a) as follows:

Section 1.727 Motions

(a) A request to the Commission for an order shall be by written motion, stating with particularity the grounds and authority therefor, and setting forth the relief or order sought.

146. Section 1.729 is amended by revising paragraph (a) and adding paragraph (i) as follows:

Section 1.729 Discovery.

(a) Subject to paragraph (i) of this section governing Accelerated Docket proceedings, a complainant may file with the Commission and serve on a defendant, concurrently with its complaint, a request for up to ten written interrogatories. A defendant may file with the Commission and serve on a complainant, during the period starting with the service of the complaint and ending with the service of its answer, a request for up to ten written interrogatories. A complainant may file with the Commission and serve on a defendant, within three calendar days of service of the defendant's answer, a request for up to five written interrogatories. Subparts of any interrogatory will be counted as separate interrogatories for purposes of compliance with this limit. Requests for interrogatories filed and served pursuant to this procedure may be used to seek discovery of any non-privileged matter that is relevant to the material facts in dispute in the pending proceeding, provided, however, that requests for interrogatories filed and served by a complainant after service of

the defendant's answer shall be limited in scope to specific factual allegations made by the defendant in support of its affirmative defenses. This procedure may not be employed for the purpose of delay, harassment or obtaining information that is beyond the scope of permissible inquiry related to the material facts in dispute in the pending proceeding.

* * * * *

(i) Discovery in Accelerated Docket proceedings.

(1) Each party to an Accelerated Docket proceeding shall serve, with its initial pleading and with any reply statements in the pre-status-conference filing (see § 1.726(g)(1)), copies of all documents in the possession, custody or control of the party that are likely to bear significantly on any claim or defense. For the purpose of this paragraph (i), document also shall include data compilations and tangible things. A document is likely to bear significantly on a claim or defense if it:

(i) Appears likely to have an influence on, or affect the outcome of, a claim or defense;

(ii) Reflects the relevant knowledge of persons who, if their potential testimony were known, might reasonably be expected to be deposed or called as a witness by any of the parties;

(iii) Is something that competent counsel would consider reasonably necessary to prepare, evaluate or try a claim or defense; or

(iv) Would not support the disclosing party's contentions.

(2) In their § 1.733(i)(4) pre-status-conference filings, parties to Accelerated Docket proceedings may request the production of additional documents. In their § 1.733(i)(4) filings, parties may also seek leave to conduct a reasonable number of depositions, including depositions of expert witnesses, if any. When requesting additional discovery, each party shall be prepared at the status conference to justify its requests by identifying the specific issue or issues on which it expects to obtain evidence from each request.

(3) Interrogatories shall not be routinely granted in Accelerated Docket proceedings. A party to an Accelerated Docket proceeding that prefers interrogatories to the other forms of available discovery, for reasons of convenience or expense, may seek leave in its § 1.733(i)(4) pre-status-conference filing to propound a limited number of interrogatories.

(4) Expert Witnesses.

(i) Any complainant in an Accelerated Docket proceeding that intends to rely on expert testimony for a purpose other than to rebut a defendant's expert evidence, shall identify its expert witnesses in the information designation required by § 1.721(a)(10)(i). In its § 1.721(a)(10)(i) information designation, such a complainant shall also provide its expert statement. For purposes of this paragraph (i)(4), an expert statement shall include a brief statement of the opinions to be expressed by the expert, the basis and reasons therefor and any data or other information that the witness considered in forming her opinions.

(ii) Any defendant in an Accelerated Docket proceeding that intends to rely on expert testimony shall identify its expert witnesses in the information designation required by

§ 1.724(f)(1). Such a defendant shall provide its expert statement with its § 1.733(i)(4), pre-status-conference filing.

(iii) Any complainant in an Accelerated Docket proceeding that intends to rely on previously undisclosed expert testimony to rebut any portion of the defendant's case shall identify the expert and provide the appropriate expert statement at the initial status conference.

(iv) Expert witnesses shall be subject to deposition in Accelerated Docket proceedings under the same rules and limitations applicable to fact witnesses.

147. Section 1.730 is amended by adding paragraphs (a) through (i) as follows:

Section 1.730 The Common Carrier Bureau's Accelerated Docket

(a) Parties to formal complaint proceedings within the responsibility of the Common Carrier Bureau (see § 0.291 of this chapter) may request inclusion on the Bureau's Accelerated Docket. As set out in §§ 1.720 - 1.736, proceedings on the Accelerated Docket are subject to shorter pleading deadlines and certain other procedural rules that do not apply to other formal complaint proceedings before the Common Carrier Bureau.

(b) Any party that contemplates filing a formal complaint may submit a request to the Chief of the Common Carrier Bureau's Enforcement Division, either by phone or in writing, seeking inclusion of its complaint, once filed, on the Accelerated Docket. In appropriate cases, Commission staff shall schedule and supervise pre-filing settlement negotiations between the parties to the dispute. If the parties do not resolve their dispute and the matter is accepted for handling on the Accelerated Docket, the complainant shall file its complaint with

a letter stating that it has gained admission to the Accelerated Docket. When it files its complaint, such a complainant shall also serve a copy of its complaint on the Commission staff that supervised the pre-filing settlement discussions.

(c) Within five days of receiving service of a complaint, any defendant in a formal complaint proceeding may submit by facsimile or hand delivery, to the Chief of the Common Carrier Bureau's Enforcement Division, a request seeking inclusion of its proceeding on the Accelerated Docket. Such a defendant contemporaneously shall transmit, in the same manner, a copy of its request to all parties to the proceeding. A defendant submitting such a request shall file and serve its answer in compliance with the requirements of § 1.724(k), except that the defendant shall not be required to serve with its answer the automatic document production required by §§ 1.724(k)(7) and 1.729(i)(1). In proceedings accepted onto the Accelerated Docket at a defendant's request, the Commission staff will conduct supervised settlement discussions as appropriate. After accepting such a proceeding onto the Accelerated Docket, Commission staff will establish a schedule for the remainder of the proceeding, including the parties' § 1.729(i)(1) automatic production of documents.

(d) During the thirty days following the effective date of these rules, any party to a pending formal complaint proceeding in which an answer has been filed or is past due may seek admission of the proceeding to the Accelerated Docket by submitting a request by facsimile or hand delivery to the Chief of the Common Carrier Bureau's Enforcement Division, with facsimile copies to all other parties to the proceeding by the same mode of transmission. If a pending proceeding is accepted onto the Accelerated Docket, Commission

staff will conduct supervised settlement discussions if appropriate and establish a schedule for the remainder of the proceeding, including the parties' § 1.729(i)(1) automatic production of documents if necessary.

(e) In determining whether to admit a proceeding onto the Accelerated Docket, Commission staff may consider factors from the following, non-exclusive list:

(1) Whether it appears that the parties to the dispute have exhausted the reasonable opportunities for settlement during the staff-supervised settlement discussions.

(2) Whether the expedited resolution of a particular dispute or category of disputes appears likely to advance competition in the telecommunications market.

(3) Whether the issues in the proceeding appear suited for decision under the constraints of the Accelerated Docket. This factor may entail, *inter alia*, examination of the number of distinct issues raised in a proceeding, the likely complexity of the necessary discovery, and whether the complainant bifurcates any damages claims for decision in a separate proceeding. See § 1.722(b).

(4) Whether the complainant states a claim for violation of the Act, or Commission rule or order that falls within the Commission's jurisdiction.

(5) Whether it appears that inclusion of a proceeding on the Accelerated Docket would be unfair to one party because of an overwhelming disparity in the parties' resources.

(6) Such other factors as the Commission staff, within its substantial discretion, may deem appropriate and conducive to the prompt and fair adjudication of complaint proceedings.

(f) If it appears at any time that a proceeding on the Accelerated Docket is no longer appropriate for such treatment, Commission staff may remove the matter from the Accelerated Docket either on its own motion or at the request of any party.

(g) Minitrials.

(1) In Accelerated Docket proceedings, the Commission may conduct a minitrial, or hearing-type proceeding, as an alternative to requiring that parties submit briefs in support of their cases. Minitrials typically will take place between 40 and 45 days after the filing of the complaint. A Commission Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ") typically will preside at the minitrial, administer oaths to witnesses, and time the parties' presentation of their cases. In consultation with the Commission staff, the ALJ will rule on objections or procedural issues that may arise during the course of the minitrial.

(2) Before a minitrial, each party will receive a specific time allotment in which it may present evidence and make argument during the minitrial. The ALJ or other Commission staff presiding at the minitrial will deduct from each party's time allotment any time that the party spends presenting either evidence or argument during the proceeding. The presiding official shall have broad discretion in determining any time penalty or deduction for a party who appears to be intentionally delaying either the proceeding or the presentation of another party's case. Within the limits imposed by its time allotment, a party may present evidence and argument in whatever manner or format it chooses, provided, however, that the submission of written testimony shall not be permitted.

(3) Three days before a minitrial, each party to a proceeding shall serve on all other parties a copy of all exhibits that the party intends to introduce during the minitrial and a list of all witnesses, including expert witnesses, that the party may call during the minitrial. Service of this material shall be accomplished either by hand or by facsimile transmission. Objections to any exhibits or proposed witness testimony will be heard before the beginning of the minitrial.

(4) No party will be permitted to call as a witness in a minitrial, or otherwise offer evidence from, an individual in that party's employ, unless the individual appears on the party's information designation (see §§ 1.721(a)(10)(i) or 1.724(f)(1)) with a general description of the issues on which she will offer evidence. No party will be permitted to present expert evidence unless the party has complied fully with the expert-disclosure requirements of § 1.729(i)(4). The Commission may permit exceptions to the rules in this paragraph (g)(4) for good cause shown.

(5) Two days before the beginning of the minitrial, parties shall file proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law. These submissions shall not exceed 40 pages per party. Within three days after the conclusion of the minitrial, parties may submit revised proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law to meet evidence introduced or arguments raised at the minitrial. These submissions shall not exceed 20 pages per party.

(6) The parties shall arrange for the stenographic transcription of minitrial proceedings so that transcripts are available and filed with the Commission no more than three days after

the conclusion of the minitrial. Absent an agreement to the contrary, the cost of the transcript shall be shared equally between the parties to the proceeding.

(h) Applications for review of staff decisions issued on delegated authority in Accelerated Docket proceedings shall comply with the filing and service requirements in § 1.115(e)(4). In those Accelerated Docket proceedings which raise issues that may not be decided on delegated authority (see 47 U.S.C. § 155(c)(1); 47 C.F.R. § 0.291(d)), the staff decision issued after the minitrial will be a recommended decision subject to adoption or modification by the Commission. Any party to the proceeding that seeks modification of the recommended decision may do so by filing comments challenging the decision within 15 days of its release by the Commission's Office of Public Affairs. (Compare § 1.4(b)(2).) Opposition comments may be filed within 15 days of the comments challenging the decision; reply comments may be filed 10 days thereafter and shall be limited to issues raised in the opposition comments.

(i) If no party files comments challenging the recommended decision, the Commission will issue its decision adopting or modifying the recommended decision within 45 days of its release. If parties to the proceeding file comments to the recommended decision, the Commission will issue its decision adopting or modifying the recommended decision within 30 days of the filing of the final comments.

148. Section 1.733 is amended by revising paragraphs (a) and (b) and adding paragraph (i) as follows:

Section 1.733 Status conference.

(a) In any complaint proceeding, the Commission may, in its discretion, direct the attorneys and/or the parties to appear before it for a status conference. Unless otherwise ordered by the Commission, and with the exception of Accelerated Docket proceedings, governed by paragraph (i) below, an initial status conference shall take place, at the time and place designated by the Commission staff, ten business days after the date the answer is due to be filed. A status conference may include discussion of:

* * * * *

(b)(1) Subject to paragraph (i) of this section governing Accelerated Docket proceedings, parties shall meet and confer prior to the initial status conference to discuss:

- (i) Settlement prospects;
- (ii) Discovery;
- (iii) Issues in dispute;
- (iv) Schedules for pleadings;
- (v) Joint statement of stipulated facts, disputed facts, and key legal issues; and
- (vi) In a 47 U.S.C. 271(d)(6)(B) proceeding, whether or not the parties agree to waive the 47 U.S.C. 271(d)(6)(B) 90-day resolution deadline.

(2) Subject to paragraph (i) of this section governing Accelerated Docket proceedings, parties shall submit a joint statement of all proposals agreed to and disputes remaining as a result of such meeting to Commission staff at least two business days prior to the scheduled initial status conference.

* * * * *

(i) Accelerated Docket Proceedings.

(1) In Accelerated Docket proceedings, the initial status conference will be held 10 days after the answer is due to be filed.

(2) Prior to the initial status conference, the parties shall confer, either in person or by telephone, about:

- (i) Discovery to which they can agree;
- (ii) Facts to which they can stipulate; and
- (iii) Factual and legal issues in dispute.

(3) Two days before the status conference, parties shall submit to Commission staff a joint statement of:

- (i) The agreements that they have reached with respect to discovery;
- (ii) The facts to which they have agreed to stipulate; and
- (iii) The disputed facts or legal issues of which they can agree to a joint statement.

(4) Two days before the status conference, each party also shall submit to Commission staff a separate statement which shall include, as appropriate, the party's statement of the disputed facts and legal issues presented by the complaint proceeding and any additional discovery that the party seeks. A complainant that wishes to reply to a defendant's affirmative defense shall do so in its pre-status-conference filing. To the extent that this filing contains statements replying to an affirmative defense, the complainant shall include, and/or serve with the statement, the witness information and documents required in

§ 1.726(g)(3)-(4). A defendant that intends to rely on expert evidence shall include its expert statement in its pre-status conference filing. (See §1.729(i)(4)(ii).)

**SEPARATE STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER HAROLD FURCHTGOTT-ROTH**

Re: Amendment of Rules Governing Procedures to Be Followed When Formal Complaints Are Filed Against Common Carriers, CC Docket No. 96-238.

Today we adopt a new procedure to ensure the speedy resolution of formal complaint proceedings filed against common carriers. *Prompt* decision-making by regulatory agencies provides a stable playing field, which allows competitive markets to thrive. But while prompt decision-making can facilitate competition, it is unfortunate that much more frequently regulatory delay acts to impede markets.

The complaint procedures adopted here provide for an initial decision within 60 days of the formal complaint being accepted on to the "Accelerated Docket." It also ensures the opportunity for prompt review of staff decisions or recommendations by the full Commission. I support this time-frame with the hope that it will facilitate competition. I also support today's decision because the Commission expressly notes that nothing in this Order expands the Commission's jurisdiction. The modifications adopted today are important procedural changes, but it is *not* the Commission's intent that this new process would provide parties with a forum to bring complaints that they could not have brought before. I feel comfortable with today's decision *because* it recognizes these jurisdictional limitations.

It is my hope that the accelerated process we adopt today will ensure the prompt resolution of disputes among market participants, thus facilitating a vibrant competitive market. Indeed, as the telecommunications market becomes increasingly competitive and markets are reacting ever more rapidly, these new procedures may be necessary to ensure that the Commission can respond to market disputes while the issues are still relevant. Finally, I appreciate that as many of these procedures are new and untried, we expect to review and revise these procedures within a year. With these limits in mind, I support today's decision.